

A Brief
HISTORY
of
NEW YORK

Containing valuable information on its
Discovery, Purchase, Settlement & the
various places of Historic Interest



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"A LANDMARK HISTORY OF NEW YORK"

FROM the highest point in the city, the Island of Manhattan spreads out in view like some great map in relief. Time and the hand of man have wrought great changes in the four hundred years since it was first discovered by an Italian navigator and it is of interest to turn back the hands of time and see what it looked like to Giovanni Verrazzano, a Florentine navigator, who sailed into the harbor on the good ship "Dauphine" in the year 1524, and should accordingly be credited with the earliest discovery of New York.

Here is the picture as Verrazzano saw it: A peninsula covered with green forests and babbling brooks, tangled grapevines, berry patches and abundance of other shrubs. In these thickets roamed many species of game which served as food for the natives who lived in crude circular huts with grass-thatched roofs, stained their faces with dyes of many colors and adorned their heads with feathers plucked from the wild fowl of the woods.

Apparently nothing came of Verrazzano's visit nor of a subsequent one by Jean Cossin some forty-six years later although his trip is authenticated by charts which he prepared, clearly indicating the bay of New York, Staten Island, and a peninsula which undoubtedly is Manhattan.

But another hardy mariner was to come and leave



Peter Minuit Purchasing Manhattan Island from the Indians



Peter Stuyvesant

his impress on the country down to this day. On September 3rd, 1609, there sailed into New York harbor a ship christened the Half-Moon under command of an Englishman named Henry Hudson who in behalf of the Dutch East Indies Company, by whom he was employed, sought a new route to the East Indies. He was received by the natives with open arms and tarried a while to rest and explore the country. Finally he again set sail on his quest

for a route to the Indies but got no farther than about the location of what we now call Albany, and here he abandoned the search and returned to Holland and made his report to his Company. His report of the new country and the enthusiastic tales of his crew fired other adventurers. The following year a Dutch ship sailed into New York Bay and opened up trade with the Indians which proved so highly profitable that in 1613 others followed and in 1614 Adrian Block set up a trading post at the tip of Manhattan Island consisting of four huts, humble beginning of the world's greatest metropolis.

The news of the discovery spread over to England, and the British, ever alert to the possibilities of trade in a new country, laid claim to the land, but the Dutch equally alert, chartered the Dutch West Indies Company in 1621 to not only trade, but to govern the new province. Peter Minuit was ordered overseas to become the first

Governor in the settlement to be known for many years as New Amsterdam. Shortly after his arrival he purchased the Island of Manhattan from the Indians for the sum of sixty guilders, equal in our money to about \$24.00, which they took out in trade in small trinkets.

For many years the Dutch and Indians lived together on the most friendly terms. A new Governor, named Kieft, however, through his cruelty brought on an Indian warfare which lasted from 1640 to 1645. Finally a treaty was signed on what was then, and is today, known as Bowling Green. Governor Kieft was recalled in 1647 and replaced by Peter Stuyvesant, the most famous of the Dutch governors. At the time he assumed office the population of the town had grown to over one thousand inhabitants. The town had been built in a helter-skelter fashion, the streets were heaped with refuse, pigs rooted in the gutters and a general air of shiftlessness pervaded the whole site. Stuyvesant at once set to work to bring order out of disorder, and established the first municipal government in 1653. The Governor was a martinet and generally domineering, which was probably the sort of man the situation demanded. He accomplished much, but despite his good works the citizens were disgruntled, and when a British fleet of four men-of-war under the command of Colonel Richard Nichols appeared in the harbor, demanding the surrender



Washington Taking Office as First President, April 30, 1789



Beginning of Stock Exchange

of New Amsterdam, the citizens prevailed on Stuyvesant to surrender. The British flag was run up and the town renamed New York in honor of James, Duke of York and Albany. Stuyvesant went back to Holland, rendered a report of his stewardship, and then returned to New York to end his days. He was buried on his farm, now the site of the Episcopal Church of St. Marks-in-

the-Bouwerie, in whose east wall, among the masses of ivy, is to be seen a stone tablet bearing the following inscription:

IN THIS VAULT LIES BURIED
PETRUS STUYVESANT

*Late Captain-General and Governor-in-Chief of Amsterdam
in New Netherland now called New York
and the Dutch West India Islands, Died in A. D. 1671/2
Aged 80 Years*

Again the new province was to undergo a change of rule. In 1672 war broke out between England and Holland, and one fine day two Dutch captains, Colve and Evertsen, sailed into New York Bay and demanded its surrender.

Upon gaining possession of the city they quickly changed the name back to the original one of New Amsterdam.

This occupation lasted slightly over one year and then, the war ending and peace being declared in 1674, the town was again restored to the English under Sir Edmund Andros, who governed from 1674 to 1682. Andros was followed by Thomas Dongan, who remained in office for six years. He was a wise and judicious governor and won the good will of the people which was strengthened when he announced he was authorized to grant the colony a liberal charter. This important grant, since known as the Dongan Charter, forms the basis of our rights as citizens today. It guaranteed trial by jury, freedom of religion and taxation only by consent of those taxed. The Charter, bearing the date of April 22, 1686, is preserved in the New York Public Library.

The city was now fifty years old and had a mixed population of about three thousand, and the Dutch language prevailed. Many adventurers were attracted to the settlement, among them the pirates of the Spanish Main, who flooded the city with their rich booty under the tacit permission of Governor Benjamin Fletcher, who had as-

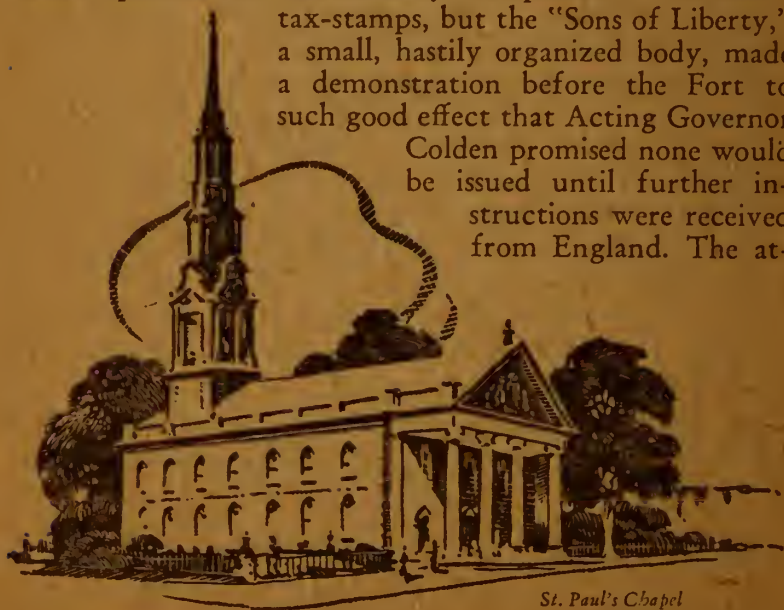


City Hall

sumed his duties in August, 1692. Even the famous Captain Kidd, who lived on Broad Street, being first commissioned commander of a Privateer by King William III to prey upon the pirates, turned pirate himself; was arrested, sent to England and hanged.

Time moved on and in 1700 we find the young city with a population of 4,000 and extending from the Battery to Wall Street, so called because of a wall or wooden palisade running across the island from the Hudson to the East River to serve as a protection against Indian raids and rumored attacks from the New Englanders. This wall was built during Peter Stuyvesant's regime and was demolished as the town grew and the roads were extended to the north. Through the following years the British rule became more rigorous and the taxes heavier. In 1765 there was dispatched to this country a shipment of the hated

tax-stamps, but the "Sons of Liberty," a small, hastily organized body, made a demonstration before the Fort to such good effect that Acting Governor Colden promised none would be issued until further instructions were received from England. The at-



St. Paul's Chapel

tempted imposition of the stamp tax set up antagonistic forces that grew in strength to such a degree during the next ten years that the news of the battle of Lexington was all that was needed to make the populace rise up and throw off the British yoke.



Fraunces Tavern

The first Continental Congress met in New York and drafted the articles of Federation. George Washington came to the city as Commander-in-Chief of the Army and reviewed the forces on the Common — now part of City Hall Park; it was on this same Common in the presence of Washington that the Declaration of Independence was read to his men.

Washington busily began the fortification of the town, now grown to about 25,000 people, and in a short time the whole river front bristled with redoubts and breastworks.

General Howe arrived with a force under him of 31,000 British and Hessian veterans and trapped part of Washington's Army on Long Island with a loss of about 2,000 killed, wounded and captured. Fighting in the vicinity of New York lasted throughout the summer but the British finally succeeded in capturing and holding the city throughout the whole period of the Revolutionary War.

On April 30, 1789, Washington was inaugurated the first President of the United States on the balcony of Federal Hall, the former City Hall at the corner of Broad and



Wall Street, where the United States Sub-Treasury now stands. Washington took up his residence in Cherry Street at Franklin Square, now the site of one of the abutments of Brooklyn Bridge.

On May 12th, 1793, the New York Stock Exchange had its modest beginning when twenty-four gentlemen traders met under a button-wood tree on Wall Street and signed the first brokers agreement.

Many of the landmarks of that day have now become historic shrines . . . St. Paul's Church at Broadway and Fulton Street where Washington worshipped and where his pew is preserved to this day; Castle Garden, where immigrants made their entry to the new land, and where Jenny Lind, the Swedish Nightingale, made her American debut, is now the Aquarium — a point of interest for all visitors; City Hall built on the site of the original Common and is in use to this day as the Office of the Mayor.

Fraunces Tavern — the oldest existing structure on Manhattan Island and the scene of Washington's farewell to his officers, stands on Broad Street and is owned and maintained by the Sons of the Revolution.



Early Transportation



Brooklyn Bridge

Trinity Church on Broadway at the head of Wall Street has in its church yard the graves of many of the notables of our early day, among them Alexander Hamilton, first Secretary of the Treasury.

Central Park was laid out in 1857 and completed in 1876. It remains intact today, as a breathing spot and recreation center of the City's millions. On October 28th, 1886, President Grover Cleveland unveiled Bartholdi's Statue of Liberty on Bedloe's Island in the harbor, as a gift from the people of France to the United States. In May, 1883, the Brooklyn Bridge, the first to span the East River, was opened to traffic. Grant's Tomb erected on Riverside Drive, to enshrine the remains of the famous Civil War General and President of the United States, was dedicated in April, 1897.

And last, but far from least, the Empire State, tallest and most famous building in the world, was erected in 1930 on the site of the old Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. This was originally the site of the Thompson farm, purchased in 1799 for the sum of \$2,500. Thompson later advertised it for sale in the following quaint language:

TO BE SOLD

A new and convenient house, barn and several out-houses, together with twenty acres of land, very pleasantly situated in the heart of New York Island, along the Middle Road, near the 3-mile stone, about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile North from Chelsea Village. The land is fertile, partly wooded and well watered and eminently suitable for the raising of various produce, profitably disposed of to opulent families of the City. It is confidently expected by those whose opinions are conceded to be sound that the rapid growth of the City and Villages of Greenwich and Chelsea will soon cause the value of the aforesaid land to be greatly enhanced.

The subscribers only motive for disposing of the above place is that circumstances require his removal to the City. For further particulars, enquire of the subscriber on the premises. — JNO. THOMPSON

No record exists of the sale by Thompson, but it was sold in 1825 by Thomas Lawrence to Charles Lawton



Castle Garden

for \$10,000. Lawton and his wife, Sophia, in less than two years made a substantial profit. They accepted the sum of \$20,500. from William B. Astor.

Astor built upon it and the site was held within the family for nearly 70 years.

At the close of the 19th Century, two Astor mansions stood, one at the 33rd Street corner, and the other at the 34th Street corner of 5th Avenue. In time both mansions were torn down to make room for the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, famous for thirty years or more over the entire world.

The Empire State takes its name from the great commonwealth in which it proudly stands. Rearing its 103 story head above the roaring city, you can stand in its observatories, one 1,040 feet, and the other 1,210 feet above the street, and view for miles around the marvels that man has wrought in 300 short years.

The Empire State Observatories are open day and night, and you are invited to come and stay as long as you like. You will find an attractive restaurant where you can sit and view the marvels of New York while you eat and sip your favorite drinks.

Tourists from every state in the Union and from every country in the world have paid a visit to the Empire State Observatory and every



Statue of Liberty



Grant's Tomb

one of them has taken away a lasting memory of the beauty of the scene that spreads to the north, east, south and west, as far as the eye can reach.

If you have not visited the EMPIRE STATE OBSERVATORY and seen this view for yourself, you have missed the thrill of a life-time — the greatest view and the greatest sight to be seen anywhere in the whole world.

The End



The Empire State



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